

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: March 11, 2021 8:00 AM

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COMMENTS FOR: HB 1128

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Kimberly Young

Election Integrity Project of Nueces County

Corpus Christi, TX

We applaud Rep. Jetton for writing this bill, which further clarifies who can and who cannot be in a polling place, and when. This allows more quality oversight of the votes being cast and counted, and it eliminates many people being present that have no business being there.

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Sandra Kelly

self

Denton, TX

Permitting individuals in a polling place or where ballots are being counted should be reserved for those trained and registered, nonpartisan or equal representation only but no political clothing / other. Nov 202 was an example of exactly what not should happen at polling and ballot counting locations across the country. Those working at polling locations, ballot counting and as elections officials should not be threatened or harassed in any form whether at the location, at their homes, at their place of businesses or through social media. This is unacceptable in a country that purports itself to be a democracy.

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Sandra Kelly

self

Denton, TX

Democracy is served by increased participation voters, not restricted legislation and access. 1. Expand mail in voting to all - no restrictions. Many need to vote by mail but do not fit within the restrictions currently set out by the state of Texas. This is discriminatory. 2. Expand early voting days / times and help to fund them. Work schedules, child care, illnesses, any number of circumstances can affect ability to vote on certain dates and times. Long lines are unacceptable and are an undue burden. Voting should not be made more difficult. 3. Expand the number of polling locations. Texas has class 750 polling locations since 2012 despite the increase in eligible voters. This is unacceptable. Increase polling locations and assist with funding. 4. INCREASE drop off locations for mail in ballots. What happened in Nov of 2020 was a travesty and looks very much like an attempt to disenfranchise voters. 5. Increase access to voter registration including automatic registration with drivers license. Voter fraud is virtually nonexistent and is an excuse to limit access. If voter fraud were an issue - then line it out. Dates, times, numbers, incident. Put out a bullet point document of instances of voter fraud in Texas - bullet points being date, time # of votes affected, party affiliation, etc. Continuing to speak of voter fraud in vague generalizations with no facts or details is again, unacceptable. Do right thing for Texas. Stop restrictive actions.

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Dennis Botkin

JBS

Richardson, TX

Stop this fake bill we want transparency in all of the election procedure only a crook would vote for this bill.

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Aaron Ramirez

Nueces county

Corpus Christi, TX

I agree with this bill. We should not having polling places crowded, possibly tampering with ballots. Especially if it's not a controlled environment and we aren't utilizing access control procedures.

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Larry Ringler

self - retired

Portland, TX

Thank you for this bill, which will help clarify who can be in a polling place, and when. We need such oversight of the votes being cast and counted, while keeping out people who shouldn't be present.

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Julie Kellogg

self / self employed insurance agent

Corpus Christi, TX

This bill makes it very clear who is allowed at a polling place. Maintaining an orderly and structured process by limiting access to individuals who are authorized to be at the polling place, or there to place a legal vote helps to ensure the integrity of the election process.

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Ben Brown

Self- Retired

Fairview, TX

I support HB1128. Having limitations on who can be present during various steps of the elections process is a good thing. It eliminates possibilities of undue, outside influence on the personnel conducting the election..

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Barbara Harless

self / retired

Murphy, TX

HB 1128 may have good intentions but it fails to strengthen election integrity. All proposed persons specified in HB 1128 as being allowed into a polling place, central counting station, and ballot board are ALREADY stated in statute. HB 1128 lengthens the Election Code without merit. As a member of the Joshua Council Texas Election Watcher Coalition, I will point out just a few of these redundancies:

Sec. 33.053. HOURS OF SERVICE AT EARLY VOTING POLLING PLACE. A watcher serving at an early voting polling place may be present at the polling place at any time it is open and until completion of the securing of any voting equipment used at the polling place that is required to be secured on the close of voting each day.

(KEY to note: "anytime it is open")

Sec. 33.054. HOURS OF SERVICE AT EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD MEETING. (a) A watcher serving at the meeting place of an early voting ballot board may be present at any time the board is processing or counting ballots and until the board completes its duties.

KEY to note: "any time the board is processing or counting ballots")

Sec. 33.055. HOURS OF SERVICE AT CENTRAL COUNTING STATION. (a) A watcher serving at a central counting station may be present at any time the station is open for the purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station.

(KEY to note: "may be present ...purpose of processing OR preparing to process")

CHAPTER 127. establishes the Central Counting Station, and a plan, listing all the individuals authorized in the CCS. Again, HB 1128 is redundant.

Please do not pass HB 1128.

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Jesse Suarez

Rabalais I&E Constructors

Corpus Christi, TX

Specifying who's qualified to be at the polls and when they're allowed to be there eliminates confusion and reduces the likelihood of unqualified people tainting the process. The increased oversight this bill provides for election process is greatly appreciated.

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Arthur Simon

self, artist

Austin, TX

I oppose this law because it is unclear who would be validating the presence of official poll watchers or enforcing the new violation.

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Jennifer Lane

self

Denton, TX

Interestingly, the individuals involved in "buying" municipal elections in my area happen to be Tea Party/Republicans, even though the elections are nominally "non-partisan." The misuse of PACs, dark money, contributions by developers and other industries such as those related to oil and gas. Also, filing these suits this past year became a political tool employed by Republicans. Stating that there are "cases" and "allegations" is not the same as saying there are proven violations. Nationwide, we have seen a disturbing increase in frivolous election-related lawsuits. There needs to be sanctions built into this law for attorneys who do this, and it would be unwise to base legislation on "allegations," when that is so clearly a political tool. The fact that Josh Reno is not prepared with demographic and geographic information is shameful.

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Kathy Williams

IndivisibleTxLedge, volunteer

Austin, TX

As a former elections clerk, I am opposed to this bill. It creates more problems than it solves. Election workers have enough

duties and responsibilities. Please do not add to them. It's already nearly impossible to find enough election clerks to work elections and they work really long hours. There are enough laws on the books to accomplish what the author intends. Election workers need enforcement support not more laws to enforce. Please do not pass this any further. I appreciate the Rep. Jetton is new and his heart may be in the right place, but this bill is ill-conceived.

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Jennifer Lane

self

Denton, TX

"Vote harvesting" is a tossed around term irresponsibly, including in this hearing. There have been very few cases ever, let alone convictions. The witnesses just aren't prepared with the numbers and factual information that they should be for this committee. The Attorney General's office representatives are being irresponsible to present this issue as a serious problem when it clearly is not.

What is ballot collection or harvesting?

It's a practice in which a voter fills out an absentee ballot, seals it in an envelope and does all the required security checks, like signing the back of the envelope so election experts can verify who voted. Then they entrust it to another person, who drops off the ballot at a mail center or ballot drop-off location.

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